# OTC Medications: Pediatric Dosing

The following is a summary of **pediatric dosing** of common oral OTC medications for patients **under** 12 years of age.
Refer to adult products for patients ages 12 years and older. Unless otherwise noted, all dosing is from **OTC** product labeling.
Make sure to provide counseling on when to seek appropriate medical care or follow up with a provider.

## Pain and Fever Relief

### Acetaminophen *Analgesic and antipyretic*

**Common OTC Formulations:**
- Infants'/Children's Tylenol Suspension (160 mg/5 mL)
- Children's Tylenol Chewable Tablet (160 mg/chewable tablet)
- Tylenol Regular Strength Tablet (325 mg/tablet)

**FDA OTC Label Dosing**
Give 1 dose every 4 hours^, as needed (**max 5 doses in 24 hours**).

| WEIGHT/AGE* | DOSING |
|---|---|
| **24-35 lbs (11-15 kg)** or 2-3 years | 160 mg (max 800 mg/24 hours) |
| **36-47 lbs (16-21 kg)** or 4-5 years | 240 mg (max 1,200 mg/24 hours) |
| **48-59 lbs (22-26 kg)** or 6-8 years | 320 or 325 mg (max 1,625 mg/24 hours) |
| **60-71 lbs (27-32 kg)** or 9-10 years | 325 or 400 mg (max 2,000 mg/24 hours) |
| **72-95 lbs (33-43 kg)** or 11 years | 325 or 480 mg (max 2,400 mg/24 hours) |

**AAP OTC Dosing†**
Give 1 dose every 4-6 hours, as needed (**max 4 doses in 24 hours**).

| WEIGHT/AGE* | DOSE |
|---|---|
| **6-11 lbs (3-5 kg)** or 0-3 months | 40 mg (max 160 mg/24 hours) |
| **12-17 lbs (5-7 kg)** or 4-11 months | 80 mg (max 320 mg/24 hours) |
| **18-23 lbs (8-10 kg)** or 12-23 months | 120 mg (max 480 mg/24 hours) |

### Ibuprofen *Analgesic and antipyretic*

**Common OTC Formulations:**
- Infants' Advil or Motrin Suspension/Drops **(50 mg/1.25 mL)**
- Children's Advil or Motrin Suspension **(100 mg/5 mL)**

Caution: There are different concentrations of liquid ibuprofen available for infants and children. Make sure that the volume of liquid matches the intended dose.

**FDA OTC Label Dosing**
Give 1 dose every 6-8 hours, as needed (**max 4 doses in 24 hours**).

| WEIGHT/AGE* | DOSE (50 mg/1.25 mL) |
|---|---|
| **12-17 lbs (5-7 kg)** or 6-11 months | 50 mg (max 200 mg/24 hours) |
| **18-23 lbs (8-10 kg)** or 12-23 months | 75 mg (max 300 mg/24 hours) |
| **WEIGHT/AGE*** | **DOSE (100 mg/5 mL)** |
| **24-35 lbs (11-15 kg)** or 2-3 years | 100 mg (max 400 mg/24 hours) |
| **36-47 lbs (16-21 kg)** or 4-5 years | 150 mg (max 600 mg/24 hours) |
| **48-59 lbs (22-26 kg)** or 6-8 years | 200 mg (max 800 mg/24 hours) |
| **60-71 lbs (27-32 kg)** or 9-10 years | 250 mg (max 1,000 mg/24 hours) |
| **72-95 lbs (33-43 kg)** or 11 years | 300 mg (max 1,200 mg/24 hours) |

^ Frequency of dosing varies slightly by formulation (e.g., chewable tablet and liquid dosed every 4 hours; 325 mg tablet dosed every 4-6 hours).
* Use weight to dose, if possible (otherwise, use age).
† Off-label OTC dosing is provided by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). However, use of OTC medication should not delay appropriate medical care.

## Allergy Relief

### Diphenhydramine *First-generation antihistamine (do not use as sleep aid)*

**Common OTC Formulations:**
- Children's Benadryl Allergy Solution (12.5 mg/5 mL)
- Children's Benadryl Chewables (12.5 mg/chewable tablet)
- Benadryl Tablets/Capsules (25 mg/pill)

**FDA OTC Label Dosing**
Give 1 dose every 4-6 hours, as needed (**max 6 doses in 24 hours**).

| AGE | DOSE |
|---|---|
| 6-11 years | 12.5-25 mg (max 150 mg/24 hours) |

**AAP OTC Dosing^***
Give 1 dose every 6 hours, as needed (**max 4 doses in 24 hours**).

| WEIGHT | DOSE |
|---|---|
| 20-24 lbs (9-10 kg) | 10 mg (max 40 mg/24 hours) |
| 25-37 lbs (11-16 kg) | 12.5 mg (max 50 mg/24 hours) |
| 38-49 lbs (17-22 kg) | 12.5 or 18.75 mg (max 75 mg/24 hours) |
| 50-99 lbs (23-45 kg) | 25 mg (max 100 mg/24 hours) |
| ≥100 lbs (≥46 kg) | 50 mg (max 200 mg/24 hours) |

### Loratadine *Second-generation antihistamine*

**Common OTC Formulations:**
- Children's Claritin Allergy Solution (5 mg/5 mL)
- Claritin RediTabs 24-Hour (10 mg/disintegrating tablet)

**FDA OTC Label Dosing**
Give 1 dose once daily **(max 1 dose in 24 hours).**

| AGE | DOSE |
|---|---|
| 2 to under 6 years | 5 mg (max 5 mg/24 hours) |
| 6 years and older | 10 mg (max 10 mg/24 hours) |

### Fexofenadine *Third-generation antihistamine*

**Common OTC Formulations:**
- Children's Allegra Allergy Suspension (30 mg/5 mL)

**FDA OTC Label Dosing**
Give 1 dose once every 12 hours **(max 2 doses in 24 hours).**

| AGE | DOSE |
|---|---|
| 2 to under 12 years | 30 mg (max 60 mg/24 hours) |

### Cetirizine *Second-generation antihistamine*

**Common OTC Formulations:**
- Children's Zyrtec Allergy Syrup (5 mg/5 mL)
- Children's Zyrtec Allergy Dissolve Tabs (10 mg/disintegrating tablet)

**FDA OTC Label Dosing**

| AGE | DOSE |
|---|---|
| 2 to under 6 years | 2.5 mg once daily<br>*If needed, the dose can be increased to a max of 5 mg once daily or 2.5 mg every 12 hours.*<br>(max 5 mg/24 hours) |
| 6 years and older | 5-10 mg once daily (max 10 mg/24 hours) |

### Levocetirizine *Third-generation antihistamine*

**Common OTC Formulations:**
- Children's Xyzal Allergy Solution (2.5 mg/5 mL)

**FDA OTC Label Dosing**
Give 1 dose once daily in the evening (**max 1 dose in 24 hours**).

| AGE | DOSE |
|---|---|
| 2-5 years | 1.25 mg (max 1.25 mg/24 hours) |
| 6-11 years | 2.5 mg (max 2.5 mg/24 hours) |

^ Off-label OTC dosing is provided by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). However, use of OTC medication should not delay appropriate medical care.
* Do not give to those under 2 years of age. Do not give to those ages 2-6 years without first consulting with their provider.

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## Cough and Congestion Relief

**Note**: The AAP does **not** recommend the use of OTC cough or cold medication in patients ages **<4 years**. Use in ages **4-6 years** is **not** recommended without first consulting with their provider.

### Dextromethorphan *Cough suppressant*

**Common OTC Formulations:**
- Children's Delsym Suspension (30 mg/5 mL)

**FDA OTC Label Dosing**
Give 1 dose every 12 hours, as needed (**max 2 doses in 24 hours**).

| AGE | DOSE |
|---|---|
| 4 to under 6 years | 15 mg (max 30 mg/24 hours) |
| 6 to under 12 years | 30 mg (max 60 mg/24 hours) |

### Guaifenesin *Expectorant*

**Common OTC Formulations:**
- Guaifenesin Solution (100 mg/5 mL)
- The OTC extended-release formulation is not labeled for ages <12 years

**FDA OTC Label Dosing**
Give 1 dose every 4 hours (**max 6 doses in 24 hours**).

| AGE | DOSE |
|---|---|
| 2 to under 6 years | 50-100 mg (max 600 mg/24 hours) |
| 6 to under 12 years | 100-200 mg (max 1,200 mg/24 hours) |

**Decongestants** are **not** recommended in patients **under 12 years** due to safety concerns and questionable efficacy.
Specifically, the **FDA** states that oral **phenylephrine** lacks sufficient data to support its efficacy as a nasal decongestant.

### Pseudoephedrine *Nasal decongestant*

**Common OTC Formulations:**
- Children's Sudafed Nasal Decongestant Solution (15 mg/5 mL)

**FDA OTC Label Dosing**
Give 1 dose every 4-6 hours, as needed (**max 4 doses in 24 hours**).

| AGE | DOSE |
|---|---|
| 4-5 years | 15 mg (max 60 mg/24 hours) |
| 6-11 years | 30 mg (max 120 mg/24 hours) |

### Phenylephrine *Nasal decongestant*

**Common OTC Formulations:**
- Children's Sudafed PE Nasal Decongestant Solution (2.5 mg/5 mL)

**FDA OTC Label Dosing**
Give 1 dose every 4 hours, as needed (**max 6 doses in 24 hours**).

| AGE | DOSE |
|---|---|
| 4-5 years | 2.5 mg (max 15 mg/24 hours) |
| 6-11 years | 5 mg (max 30 mg/24 hours) |

## Constipation Relief

**Caution:** The use of agents to treat constipation in pediatric patients should only be considered **after** seeking medical care.

### Polyethylene Glycol *Osmotic laxative* ①

**Common OTC Formulations:** Miralax Powder (PEG 3350)

**Off-Label OTC Dosing^**
Do not exceed adult OTC dosing (17 grams daily) unless directed by provider.

| INDICATION | DOSE |
|---|---|
| Fecal impaction | 1 to 1.5 grams/kg daily for 3-6 days |
| Constipation | **Initial**: 0.4 grams/kg daily<br>**Maintenance**: 0.2 to 0.8 grams/kg daily<br>*Adjust dosing per clinical response* |

The volume of liquid for mixing is proportional to the dose of PEG 3350 powder. Dissolve the powder in the appropriate volume of liquid and drink.

| PEG 3350 DOSE | VOLUME OF LIQUID FOR MIXING |
|---|---|
| 4.25 grams (¼ capful) | 2 oz (~60 mL) |
| 8.5 grams (½ capful) | 4 oz (~120 mL) |
| 17 grams (1 capful) | 8 oz (~240 mL) |

### Docusate *Stool softener* ②

**Common OTC Formulations:**
- Pedia-Lax Liquid (50 mg/15 mL)
- Colace (50 or 100 mg/capsule)

**FDA OTC Label Dosing**
Give 1 dose once daily or in divided doses.

| AGE | DOSE |
|---|---|
| 2 to under 12 years | 50-150 mg (max 150 mg/24 hours) |

^ Off-label dosing information is from the 2014 Clinical Guideline for the Evaluation and Treatment of Functional Constipation in Infants and Children.

### Senna *Stimulant laxative* ②

**Common OTC Formulations:** Senokot Tablet (8.6 mg/tablet)

**FDA OTC Label Dosing**

| AGE | DOSE |
|---|---|
| 2 to under 6 years | **Initial**: 4.3 mg (½ tablet) once daily<br>**Max**: 8.6 mg (1 tablet) twice daily |
| 6 to under 12 years | **Initial**: 8.6 mg (1 tablet) once daily<br>**Max**: 17.2 mg (2 tablets) twice daily |

### Magnesium Citrate *Saline laxative* ②

**Common OTC Formulations:** Magnesium Citrate Liquid (1.745 grams/oz)

**FDA OTC Label Dosing**
Give 1 dose once daily or in divided doses. Drink 8 oz of liquid with each dose.

| AGE | DOSE |
|---|---|
| 2 to under 6 years | 2 to 3 oz (max 3 oz/24 hours) |
| 6 to under 12 years | 3 to 7 oz (max 7 oz/24 hours) |

### Magnesium Hydroxide *Saline laxative* ②

**Common OTC Formulations:** Milk of Magnesia Liquid (1,200 mg/15 mL)

**FDA OTC Label Dosing**
Give 1 dose once daily or in divided doses. Drink 8 oz of liquid with each dose.

| AGE | DOSE |
|---|---|
| 6-11 years | 1,200-2,400 mg (max 2,400 mg/24 hours) |

① Generally considered first-line agent for pediatric constipation.
② Generally considered second-line agent for pediatric constipation.

## Miscellaneous GI Agents

### Calcium Carbonate *Antacid*

Caution: The use of agents to treat heartburn or GERD in pediatric patients should only be considered after seeking medical care.

Please note: Pepto Kids does **not** contain aspirin or subsalicylate. Due to the concern for Reye's syndrome, avoid using adult Pepto formulations and all products containing aspirin or subsalicylate in pediatric patients.

**Common OTC Formulations:**
- Pepto Kids Chewable Tablet (400 mg/chewable tablet)

**FDA OTC Label Dosing**
Repeat dose, as needed **(max 3 doses in 24 hours).**

| WEIGHT/AGE^ | DOSE |
|---|---|
| **24-47 lbs (11-21 kg)** or 2-5 years | 400 mg (max 1,200 mg/24 hours) |
| **48-95 lbs (22-43 kg)** or 6-11 years | 800 mg (max 2,400 mg/24 hours) |

^ Use weight to dose, if possible (otherwise, use age).

### Loperamide *Antidiarrheal*

Caution: The use of antidiarrheal agents in pediatric patients should only be considered after seeking medical care.

**Common OTC Formulations:** Imodium A-D Solution (1 mg/7.5 mL)

**FDA OTC Label Dosing**
Drink plenty of clear fluids to help prevent dehydration caused by diarrhea.

| WEIGHT/AGE^ | DOSE |
|---|---|
| **48-59 lbs (22-26 kg)** or 6-8 years | 2 mg after first loose stool, then 1 mg after each loose stool (max 4 mg/24 hours) |
| **60-95 lbs (27-43 kg)** or 9-11 years | 2 mg after first loose stool, then 1 mg after each loose stool (max 6 mg in 24 hours) |

### Simethicone *Gas relief*

**Common OTC Formulations:** Mylicon Infant Gas Relief (20 mg/0.3 mL)

**FDA OTC Label Dosing**
Repeat dose, as needed, after meals and at bedtime (**max 12 doses in 24 hours**).

| WEIGHT/AGE | DOSE |
|---|---|
| **<24 lbs (<11 kg)** or <2 years | 20 mg (max 240 mg/24 hours) |
| **≥24 lbs (≥11 kg)** or ≥2 years | 40 mg (max 480 mg/24 hours) |